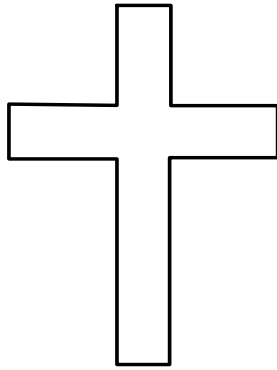


Three Dreams

(a story)



THREE DREAMS (BY JOHN D. RITTER)
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Three Dreams

(a fictional story)

My Dear Colleagues,

As a fellow member of the allied medical professions, I submit to you a request for an interdisciplinary analysis of the following case study, specifically from a psychoanalytical point of view. The subject of this case is one of our own associates. We all acknowledge that it is a difficult and delicate matter for a doctor to request treatment from other doctors, but when a physician cannot heal himself, to whom can he turn? As you may have guessed, my associates, the subject in this study is me. The distress from which I have found no relief is simply this: three dreams. Three inescapable dreams.

My brief profile is as follows: I am a logical and rational man. And the fact that this phenomenon does not easily fit within the confines of simple logic unsettles me. I've tried repeatedly to dismiss these dreams, but how can a man hide from his own thoughts? As a scientist and a humanist, pragmatic and methodical, I am convinced that this experience can be explained rationally and scientifically, and yet I am unsatisfied with my own conclusions. Therefore, finding no reasonable explanation for the dreams' origin, meaning, and implications, I now present them to you, anticipating an accurate and scientific interpretation.

I had three dreams in a single night. In the first, a man came and stood before me. His face was indistinguishable, shrouded in a pitch-black shadow cast by a bright light coming from behind him. He placed his hand on my shoulder and began speaking, but for some reason, I couldn't understand him. And his simple contact with my shoulder, usually a warm and friendly gesture, was also strange. It seemed to be a direct invasion of my privacy. Who was this man, and why was he so bold? What right did he have to touch me? I spoke up, my anger growing. "Hey, what's the problem? Get your hand off me. What do you want? I can help you if you just tell me what you need. I'm a doctor." But there was no sign that he understood me. Why couldn't we communicate? This featureless, nameless intruder definitely wanted *something* – but what? Meanwhile his touch was somehow becoming unbearably painful. Was this deliberate or was he simply unaware of how much he was hurting me? Well, deliberate or not, this contact had to stop. And since I wasn't able to communicate with him, I lashed out with what I found in my hand – a scalpel!

I bolted upright in bed instantly, sweating and out of breath. But much more significantly, my whole shoulder was *black and blue!*

After about forty minutes, I regained my composure enough to fall back asleep. I recall thinking that I would examine my shoulder the next day and heard myself murmuring: "All facts will be examined in the light of day," just before I closed my eyes. The phrasing seemed odd to me at the time; I usually don't talk that way.

In the second dream, I stood before a judge in a dimly-lit courtroom. Why was I here, I wondered? I strained to look for a clue in the judge's eyes, but his unchanging expression revealed nothing. I quickly scanned the courtroom. There was no prosecutor. Who was bringing the charge against me? And how could I possibly prove my innocence if I didn't even know the charge? Neither was there a defender. Without these, who would prove my guilt or innocence to a jury of my peers? But there was no jury either! To whom could I make my appeal for justice? I quickly looked back into the judge's eyes. His gaze seemed to penetrate me. Was he aware of my inner thoughts? Surely I'd done many things wrong – everybody has – that's just who we are. Could it be somehow, though, that I was not being tried for a *specific act*, but for *everything* that I had done? If that was the case, then I was on trial for being myself and the evidence against me, *was me!* If that's true, then no prosecutor, defender, or jury was necessary

to determine if I was guilty of being *myself*. In a flash it hit me! Whatever I had done in my life was done because of *who I am*, and that's exactly what this trial was about – **me!**

At that very moment of insight, the judge pointed his finger at me and began pronouncing the verdict. I had trouble understanding his language except for a word or two here and there, but I clearly remember hearing "... *you knew... deliberately... without consideration... clearly written... personally warned you... in direct contempt...*" This judgment continued for some time and as a matter of fact, never actually concluded. Rather, the courtroom scene gradually faded, growing weaker and weaker, until I was awakened with only the sound of judgment echoing in my ears. I recall feeling terribly guilt-ridden and lonely. It seemed that these feelings fed each other, because although I was hoping that someone would step forward to testify that I had done nothing wrong, I knew deep inside that no one *could ever* prove such a claim, because in fact, I was guilty – of many things. Then, despairing further, I wondered if I really had been *so wicked* as to deserve such bitter isolation. And the harder I worked to summon recollections of my good deeds (which an advocate might use on my behalf), the more I felt convicted about those actions I *could* recall. This devilish cycle continued as I battled to consciousness. I kept struggling to devise a way out of this trap, but my mind had been bruised and battered with the realization that *there simply was no escape*. The eternity of this hellish cycle diminished and mercifully vanished only when I began to wake up and sense that time was again passing for me. Exhausted, I made a mental note of this second foreboding dream and placed it on my list of puzzling phenomena to be examined the next day. After a while, I returned to the difficult task of trying to rest.

The content of the third dream was unexpected and unnatural for me, and yet, the plain facts are these: I found myself talking with Jesus. I neither knew nor recognized Him, but somehow was sure that it was Him. He asked me how intelligent I was. When I told him that I was a medical doctor, He held up a hand and placed His thumb and forefinger very close together. He replied matter-of-factly, "Compared to God's knowledge, yours is this big . . .," and squeezed His fingers together, almost touching, ". . . and God's knowledge is this big," and stood on His tiptoes holding one hand over His head, pointing up. He then asked me how intelligent the *least* intelligent person on the earth was. I considered for a moment poorly-educated people, and then those with no education, then young children and infants, and then brain-damaged people, brain-dead people, fetuses, and finally embryos. But I quickly spotted the trap He was laying for me. If I answered that the least intelligent person was the one with the *least education*, He would surely cite those with little or no education whose intellectual accomplishments still dazzle the world. If I asserted that the person with the *smallest brain* was the least intelligent, He would counter with a person whose *adult-sized* brain wasn't working correctly. If I offered the *youngest person*, He would ask me how young? If I said a *newborn baby*, He would point out that every newborn already knows about hunger, cold, light, voices, and people. "Does this intelligence magically appear the minute a child is born?" -He would ask me. So when I discerned that I couldn't verbally describe intelligence without exposing my belief about the beginning of human life, I hesitated, thinking that the best course would be to evade Him by not answering. On the other hand, I didn't want Him to think that *I wasn't intelligent enough* to answer His question, so I decided to sidestep His real point and simply respond to the surface question. I held my fingers up and formed the smallest gap I could possibly make between them. "Are you able to understand My words?" He asked. "Yes," I replied. "Then if God, with all of His knowledge, is able to communicate with you who has this much intelligence," (and He squeezed His fingers together again) "is it any more difficult for Him to communicate with those having what you call 'less intelligence'?" (and drew His fingers closer together to precisely match my description of them)!

I was caught and couldn't answer; I became frightened. If God can actually communicate with unborn children, then His ears would also have clearly heard their silent screams the moment I. . . . But *did* He hear, I wondered? Immediately He took me to a building and handed me a yardstick. "Measure it," He commanded. After about fifteen or twenty minutes, the perimeter was measured. "Now let's go inside," He said.

The room was *absolutely packed* with people. One man approached and called me by name. "Could you help me please, Doctor Barnes?" he asked politely. "I've always wanted to know – what color is the sky?" Another piped up softly, "Yes, what does air smell like?" "And what about the forest – what exactly is *in* a

forest?" voiced another. "Yes, and why am I here?" someone else asked with the innocent frankness of a child. I turned desperately to Jesus – "Who are these people? Why are they in this building? How do they know me? Why are they asking me these questions?"

"This is the building *you* built," He calmly explained. "It contains all of the people you murdered while still in the womb. You've stolen precious answers to questions that life would have provided naturally. They have a right to those answers. So answer them," He commanded.

But I couldn't. I just couldn't. Staggering backwards under the full impact of His simple command, I groped for the door, but there was none! How could there be a way in, but no way out? I fell to my knees and buried my face in the grave of my hands, unable to bear the innocence around me. Trying to hide from Him, I sobbed, "It's not my fault; it's not my fault! I didn't do anything wrong – and I certainly didn't steal from them the lives they *should* have had. I'm no thief!" Then I became angry. Very angry! Who did He think He was, accusing me with these theatrics? I stood up, gnashed my teeth together, pointed my finger right in Jesus' face and blasted: "I was only doing my job! *And* what I did was legal!"

"Really? Show me where it is written," He said unmoved, handing me a Bible.

"Oh, no. No you don't. That's not fair. I don't go by the Bible; I go by the Constitution of the United States of America. It clearly establishes a legislative branch to make laws, an executive branch to execute those laws, and a judicial branch to judge whether or not those laws have been broken. And all three agree that abortion is legal!"

"Really?" He countered. "Has it *always* been that way?"

"Well, no. When the constitution was first written, abortion was illegal," I explained. "Then a few years ago that changed. In some states it became legal; in others it remained illegal for a while. Those people who were in jail for murder were released after abortion was legalized."

"So," the Lord inquired, "sometimes who I put in the womb is a person and sometimes he isn't, depending on his state's law at the time? Am I understanding you correctly? And based on the average of all fifty states, I don't turn a fetus into a person until it is twenty-two weeks old, is that right? Therefore, depending on the year and the state, sometimes the removal of a twenty-two-week-old fetus is the murder of a person, and sometimes it isn't. Well, *My* constitution of the universe, heaven, and hell says that *wherever* murder is condoned, *is* hellish! In a little while, all murderers will live together in a place where it will be practiced unrestrained forever. But *you're* telling me that when people involved in abortions appear before *My* throne for judgment, I should first ask them in which state they lived, and what the state's law was on the day of the abortion. Okay, but let's say that the law changes in a given state and abortion becomes legal. What should be done with those who have already been sent to hell forever for murdering the innocent according to their state's law? Do you expect *Me* to change *My* laws every time you change yours? And should I transfer the condemned to heaven for a great reward? And, of course, if that law changes again on earth, must I immediately send them back to their great punishment again? Well, doctor, this is all very confusing and, I must say, shortsighted. I therefore respectfully decline your proposal to supersede *Me* and *My* laws with you and *your* laws. We've seen the building fashioned out of the actions you performed, using *your* laws as its foundation. Would you like to see the building that *I* prepared for you using *My* laws as its foundation?"

"What do you mean '*prepared for me*'?" I asked.

"Look here Yes, here it is, in chapter 14 of John's record of *My* words, verse 2: 'In *My* Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there you may be also.' Here, take this yardstick and measure that building," He said, pointing toward the horizon.

As I started in that direction, I noticed that this building was different from the first. *Very different!* It was huge – as big as a city – but without walls! And I couldn't see how to measure it since it had no endpoints. It wasn't built based on the limited works which I had done; rather, it was based on the works which *Jesus* had done *for* me. It was vast and breathtakingly beautiful. Something sparkled like gold, but alive – *happy gold*, I guess you could say! Instantly I was standing in the building. What I had seen wasn't physical gold at all, but a moment of a person's time. It was a man thanking me for something.

Instantly it made sense to me. On earth, when we want to express thanks for something, we give a medallion, a card, a certificate, or a gift with an inscription of our gratitude. The material of the message always has far less value than the message itself. Cards and certificates are just paper; medallions are just cloth and metal; the most expensive gifts can only be jewels or money – both of which are just dirt. But the *thanks itself* lasts forever, even though it fades from our minds. That's why *token* gifts are usually given with our expressions of appreciation – to serve as *reminders*. Well, rather than preserving the mere tokens, the actual and full expression of the bond of gratitude itself is continually present in heaven.

So this man said to me, "Thank you doctor, thank you very much. I cannot express how grateful I am for what you have done."

"What I have done? I don't even know you," I replied.

"True, true. But you knew my daughter and helped bring my granddaughter into the world. When they were in danger during childbirth and very close to death, when I couldn't help them myself, you were there. *They* are my heritage, my inheritance from Almighty God. I loved Him on the earth and gave Him my life. And He loved me and gave me His. When He considered what He could do to make me happy on earth and for all time, He gave me a wife and a daughter. And from this daughter came more descendants, all of whom call me father and know my name. All of whom I love. God has made me very, very rich – and very, very happy. If my granddaughter had died, she would not have given birth to her children, and their generations after them. And my great-great grandfather has received his inheritance in me. He is also here to meet you. My best friend is here too. He cannot stop rejoicing when he sees how good God has been to me. He would like to thank you as well. And Moses is here . . . and Abraham."

This was amazing! My building was full of people whose lives I had touched in a small way. Well, what I *thought* was small at the time. But in terms of eternity, God had multiplied it, with intricate and infinite precision, threading blessings and fulfilling promises to countless generations before and after me. I was so narrow in my thinking; so blind to what God had been doing on the earth through me. He had used me in ways that I didn't even realize in order to bless these people. Not only that, but He took my small efforts and multiplied them by His power to create a mansion of immeasurable, living treasures for me in heaven, using *His law* as its foundation – that is, His law of endless, boundless, inexhaustible, and indescribably tender mercy and love.

Just then, I became aware of the thoughts in my head – these weren't my ideas! He was trying to influence me! Instantly I became angry again and realized what this 'heaven' was all about. Just a *trick* to get me to admit that I was wrong – wrong my whole life! Jesus just wanted to judge me on His own terms, not mine. And this mansion was just bait! Yes, that's it. Just bait for His trap. If I accepted this mansion-gift, I would have to accept the *way* it came to me – through **His** efforts, not mine. Well, I'm smarter than that, and I have my pride. I want to be judged on my **own** merit. If I live in a mansion, I want to build it myself, and not receive it as a handout from some benefactor!

"Oh! You'd rather receive the outcome of *your own* actions than mine, and be judged on your own terms?" He asked, obviously reading my thoughts. "Yes!" I declared emphatically. "As you wish," Jesus replied. "I'll never take away your free will . . . , or its consequences."

As a result, the mansion and all the people in it vanished instantly, and Jesus suddenly became radiantly white. He walked out of my presence and stood behind me. The bright light coming from Him cast my face in a deep, dark shadow. I looked up and saw a man standing a short distance away. I walked over to

meet him, but as I stood in front of him I couldn't see his face because the intense light from Jesus caused my shadow to darken it. I placed my hand on his shoulder, imploring him to help me because I was confused and alone. But instead of deriving relief from him, I drew only hostility. In a moment, he had grown so violently enraged, I thought he was about to kill me. Suddenly, Jesus stepped from behind me and I saw the hatred in the stranger's eyes clearly in the light. It was me – and I hated *myself!* Then I heard: "I can help you. I'm a doctor. Relax now, this is my job. I do it every day. It won't hurt a bit. You'll just feel a slight cramp." My speech! He was using my speech! The only time I ever made that speech was when I was performing. . . . I quickly looked in his left hand. My instrument! And he lunged toward me.

"Stop!!!! No!!!!" I screamed.

"No?" Jesus asked calmly, standing right there beside me. "Don't you want the same help, the same mercy which you gave to countless others, to be given back to you? Doctor, make up your mind," Jesus said. "If you don't want **my** mercy and you don't want **yours**, then whose *do* you want – the devil's?" "That's ridiculous. There is no devil," I snapped. "Well then, you have nothing to fear from his judgment, do you?" Jesus countered.

I'm not stupid. I could see that He was using fear of the devil's judgment to get me to admit that what I'd done was wrong. But it *really wasn't* my fault. It was those women who brought their babies to me. I accuse *them!* If they had not brought them, I wouldn't have killed them.

"So you want *their* judgment instead?" Jesus asked, again reading my thoughts. "These women who decided that taking the life of another human being was a good thing to do, since for them it was unwanted, inconvenient, an embarrassment, imperfect, or untimely. Well, we'll just place you inside the wombs of these women, and grant them the right to choose what they will do with you, repeatedly, forever."

"But there's no pain in the womb. It's just a fetus. It can't feel. It can't understand. It can't communicate," I argued.

"Really?" He asked. "I thought we already established that you are the one who can't communicate with them, even though God can. What makes you an expert anyway? How does gravity work? What does it feel like to stand inside the sun? Why does a dog care for its pups? How does a flower grow? How do you command the earth to spin? If you don't know simple things like these, how can you be so sure that you know what goes on inside the womb? Tell me, how is human flesh woven? How are spirits created? What is their relationship with the human mind? What is the limit of God's ability to communicate with people, young or old, sick or healthy? What exactly can people understand and feel, and when? When God speaks to infants in their mother's wombs, what does He say, and why? What do they need to hear? How do they answer? To what lengths will He go in order to protect and comfort them? Based on *your* knowledge, you gambled with the innocent lives placed in your care. Therefore, trade places with an unborn child, take your chances, and let the same mercy that you applied, be applied to you."

"No sir! No! You're wrong!" I countered vehemently. "It's not fair to compare me with You. You're implying that I am against You just because You're greater than me. I'm not at war with You!"

"Oh yes you are," He said. "You clearly knew that there were many things about this world that you did not understand, yet you deliberately chose to presume that your limited knowledge was adequate to act as judge, jury, and executioner of the innocent. Without consideration of what was clearly written in the Bible, you acted as though you knew more than Me, after I personally warned you time and time again. Your judgments were in direct contempt of My judgments, and it is now time for you to either prove your innocence or find someone to help you withstand My judgments, if possible."

I felt like I was on trial again! Just as in the second dream. And those words were familiar "... *you knew... deliberately... without consideration... clearly written... personally warned you... in direct contempt....*"

"What about the men who got those women pregnant?" I demanded. "It's *their* fault. I didn't make them lust, or rape, or give in to selfishness."

Jesus replied, "What do you do when a drunk driver smashes into another car and the victims are brought into your emergency room, doctor? Do you kill the victims because they had an encounter with a selfish man? Do you kill *them* because it would be embarrassing or inconvenient for the drunk driver to be publicly exposed? Or do you *legalize* drunk driving by asserting that it's only realistic to acknowledge that men will always drink and drive? Do you extend that law further to *rationalize* their behavior, by putting the victims to death rather than putting the drunk drivers to death?"

"No – of course not, Jesus. That's insane," I replied. "And no, I do not want the judgment of *those* men, since they would only rape and abuse me, and show me a selfish man's love, mercy, and support – which is hate, cruelty, and abandonment. I want the judgment of the judges themselves! And of those who created the law. Surely they are blameless!"

Jesus countered with irrefutable clarity again, "Each one of the judges was only capable of making judgments due to the fact that they were born. If they had been aborted, they would not have made those judgments. Therefore, each one of them will be given into the hands of their own decisions. The innocent ones they condemned to early death will rise up and judge **them!** They will be placed inside a womb, the womb of the earth *they* fashioned out of the one I created, and will be continually destroyed, continually unprotected, continually undefended, and no one will come to their rescue forever. You may now join them as you have chosen."

"No, no, no! Okay, I don't want the judgment of the judges. But *You* also have been no help to me. I accuse You of 'abortion-bashing.'" "What's that?" He asked. "You are demeaning those who cause abortions, have abortions, legalize abortions, and perform abortions. And You have not helped me at all," I blasted. "First of all" Jesus replied, "I am not 'required' to help you. But if I *do* help you, it is My choice. Secondly, what about dying on the cross for you? Doesn't that count for *anything* in your sight? And finally, what about warning you in dreams? What about sending My servants to teach you not to violate My laws – laws given for your own good? What about asking My servants to go the extra mile and give up their time and money to shelter and feed the offenders as well as the offended, to pay your hospital bills, to care for your unwanted, to cover your shame and to mend your wounds, to turn your disaster into blessing without expectation of reward? To faithfully pay your judges' wages while quietly being thrown into prison by them, to suffer broken bones, and to lose fortunes, homes, and lives on your account? In what way does the love which My servants and I have shown you constitute 'bashing'? Answer Me."

Again I couldn't answer and stood in shamed silence. At that moment I resolved that I didn't really like Jesus very much. Even though He had never done anything wrong to me personally, I could see that His attitude was dangerous and that He, or anyone like Him, should be stopped. He is a danger to our business, our profession, our country's laws, and the American way of life – freedom to do and be what we want! When I resolved to warn my friends and colleagues about Him, I suddenly woke up.

There are rumors that others in our profession are having similar dreams as well. I have analyzed this phenomenon and drawn my own conclusions. The results will not be released until you have had an opportunity to review the matter yourselves. With your help, I hope we can all come to a rational explanation of these events. One thing is certain; these facts must be brought to light in order to settle this issue once and for all. I am anticipating your reply.

My sincere thanks,
Dr. H. B. Barnes

Thoughts from the bible:

- "Treat others as you would have them treat you."
- "Whatever you did to the least of these little ones, you did it to Me."
- "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows he shall surely reap."
- "God judges a man according to his ways."
- "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes."
- "The judgments of the Lord are true and pure and righteous altogether." Man's 'justice' is relative and conditional. God's justice is absolute and pure.
- "Because you say you are *not* blind, your sin remains."
- "And He will say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.'"

- "Jesus wept."
- "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever."
- "He speaks to men in dreams of the night. . . ."
- "And the king was troubled by the dream. . . ."

- "And God said to His servant Abraham, 'Go outside and count the stars if you can. That's how many descendants I will give you in order to bless you.'"
- "And they brought their babies to (one of Abraham's descendants,) Jesus. When the disciples rebuked them for bothering Jesus, He became indignant, took the children in His arms, and said to His disciples, 'Stop forbidding these little ones from coming to Me; the kingdom of heaven *belongs* to such as these.'"
- "*This* is true religion in the sight of God: to *care* for orphans and widows," and to *help* the helpless – just as He does.